

# The Pileup

## Newsletter of the CDXA

And the Winner Is.....



|        |                |                        |
|--------|----------------|------------------------|
| W4VHF  | Ted Goldthorpe | President              |
| N4HN   | Tom Wright     | Vice-Pres.             |
| K4SQR  | Jim Miller     | Sec.-Treas.            |
| K4MD   | Joe Simpkins   | Cluster Mgr.           |
| W3GQ   | Paul Sturpe    | Assoc.<br>Cluster Mgr. |
| WB4BXW | Wayne Setzer   | Webmaster              |
| K8YC   | John Scott     | Editor                 |

At the conclusion of the Charlotte Hamfest on Sunday, March 13, President Goldthorpe called the winning name in the raffle for a nifty Troy-Bilt 900 watt power generator. The winner was Bill LaMay, K3RMW of Matthews, North Carolina. Bill is in his 19<sup>th</sup> year with the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshall's office, and is a member of Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. Bill holds an Advanced Class operators ticket and manages to chase a little DX on 20 meters when time permits.

Ted sent the above picture to the Editor on Sunday afternoon, following the event, with the following comments, "Took the generator home, called the winner, and he was here in 30 minutes. A delightful, delightful guy."

There were a lot of disappointed folks following the draw of the winning entry. By universal acclaim, the generator was probably our "best ever" raffle prizes. Thanks to all who supported the raffle. Proceeds will enable CDXA to provide financial support to DXpeditions.

| CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| W4DXA (11 mi. NE of Mooresville)                 | 144.93 MHz (1200 bits/second)                             | 441.00 MHz (9600 bits/second)  |
| K4MD Charlotte, NC                               | 144.91 MHz (1200 bits/second)                             | 441.075 MHz (9600 bits/second) |
| K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet)                     | k4md.tzo.com  |                                |
| CDXA Repeater 147.18 MHz (+600 )                 | W4DXA, Near Fort Mill, SC                                 |                                |
| World Wide Web Homepage                          | www.cdxa.org  |                                |
| Wednesday Luncheon (11:30 AM)                    | Shoney's, 355 Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC (704-525-4395) |                                |

## Bravo, Marc!

One of the wonderful aspects of our hobby is the willingness shown by many to help a fellow ham—whether it be as an Elmer in helping with licensing or in an antenna-raising party. Often, assistance is rendered to someone with whom we share some relationship such as through an amateur radio club or as a long standing friend. Yet, hams also help their fellow man just because it is the right thing to do.

When the March 2005 issue of QST arrived, page 13 had an item about a ham who helped restore an antenna system for a disabled ham, Kirk Morrison (KA4KXM), of Liberty Hill, South Carolina. Kirk's antenna system had come down in a recent hurricane. Kirk contacted the ARRL Section Manager asking for help. The Section Manager passed the request along to the ARRL Technical Coordinator, Marc Tarplee (N4UFP). Marc stopped by Kirk's home and put up a 75 meter dipole and a G5RV. Despite a tussle with Kirk's pet goat when Marc invaded its "space", the job was successfully completed. Does that name sound familiar? You bet it does—Marc is a member of CDXA and provided us with an interesting article entitled "DXing on Mars" in the February 2004 issue of the *PILEUP*. Way to go, Marc!

### The Pileup

Official Newsletter of the Carolina DX Association  
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Published monthly 10 times per year, excluding the months of June and December.

The purpose of the association is to secure for the members the pleasures and benefits of the association of persons having a common interest in Amateur Radio.

Members of the CDXA shall adhere to "The Amateur's Code" as published from time to time in *The ARRL Handbook for Radio Amateurs*, and shall consist of those valid licensed amateur operators having an interest in promoting amateur radio. Long distance communications (DX) is of special interest to members of the association, but said interest is not a requirement of membership.

Dues are \$30 per year for those using the PacketCluster maintained by the Association, \$15 otherwise, payable each January. Dues are payable by check to the Secretary/Treasurer:  
Jim Miller, K4SQR  
11600 Hilda Court  
Charlotte, NC 28226

Address, telephone, and email address changes should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer at the above address or via email at: k4sqr@juno.com.

## K4QVK Earns 5BDXCC

Arlin Wilson, K4QVK, has earned 5BDXCC status as certificate #5584. Arlin adds this award to his already achieved status on the Honor Roll with 328 confirmed active entities, 344 all time entities. From all the members in CDXA, Arlin, congratulations on a job well done. Next stop--#1 on the Honor Roll??

### The Toolbox

By Don Daso, K4ZA

*(Reprinted with permission from the July, 2004 issue of the PVRC newsletter.)*

Recently, while working on some tower and antenna jobs, my clients have reacted to some of the tools in my toolbox—with surprise and questions. Here then, are the answers to those questions, along with some general descriptions.

The single most interesting tool I own (apparently, based on reactions) is a set of ratcheting box/open-end combination wrenches. What's unique about them (besides the novelty of a ratcheting box-end wrench) is that the ratchet works in only 5-degrees of rotation. When you're working atop a tower, sometimes in cramped conditions, that smaller ratchet angle can make a difference and save you time. Plus, the box-end wrench gives you a little more torque compared to a typical socket wrench. Craftsman, along with Husky, Snap-On, and so forth, make these wrenches. Mine have proven so useful, I've got two sets.

For years, I relied on Klein "lineman's pliers" to solve lots of gripping and cutting problems. But recently, I have found the "Robo-Grip" pliers to be more useful when faced with aluminum elements, larger connector on baluns, and so forth. They made the difference a few weeks ago when taking down some old Telrex beams that had been up in the air since 1978. The hardware was so rusted that regular wrenches wouldn't fit. Again, several manufacturers make them, including Craftsman. I'm carrying a little more weight in the pouch, but again, they can save time.

On those same Telrex beams, I once again relied on PB Blaster (a chemical catalyst) to loosen long-rusted hardware. W9GE turned me on to this stuff last year and I continue to be amazed by it. Once we'd trammed the

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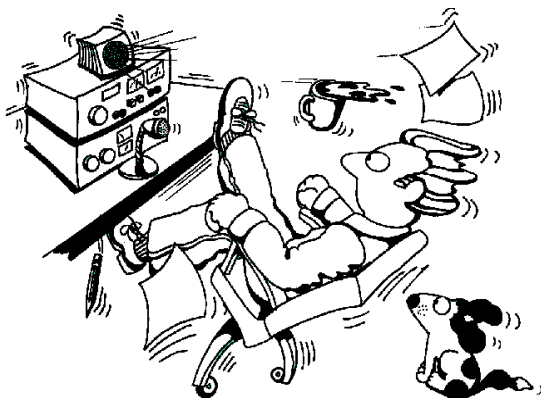
beams down, the owner began taking them apart. He sprayed everything with WD-40. Then N4ZC gave him some Blaster, and the beams were soon enough in pieces. Finally available here in the Carolinas at Wal-Mart. The old tag line, "This stuff really works," truly applies to this product!

I used to carry multiple screwdrivers. But two years ago, I switched to one of those cheap (Chinese) multi-bit screwdrivers—two sizes of straight as well as Phillips blades. Only once during those two years have I needed something that would provide a bit more torque, so now my pouch is lighter by not carrying so many screwdrivers.

It's been said thousands of times, but bears repeating—if you want your electrical tape to last on the tower, use only Scotch 88 and cut the last wrap, allowing the tape to "relax" before smoothing it out. I just came off a tower last week where the tape had been tugged and pulled apart, and each wrap was coming apart, flapping in the breeze, even though the tower had just been put up weeks before.

It's also been said thousands of times, but bears repeating—*never saddle a dead horse*. This same tower used ¼-inch EHS with Crosby clips, but the owner had alternated each clip at each end of the guys. Naturally, he didn't appreciate my pointing out this mnemonic hint of how to prevent such a *faux pas*...since his other two towers rode out Hurricane Hugo just fine back in '89, etc. Fortunately, the installation had multiple clips at each guy end, so the holding power wasn't compromised too much.

What's in your toolbox? --K4ZA



## Ten and Twenty Years Ago....

(Taken from the **PILEUP** archive on the CDXA website. —The Editor)

### Twenty Years Ago...

A short biographical sketch of J. M. Ahumada, LU2DX, highlighted the illustrious DXing career of this Argentine attorney. . . . CDXA announced that it would sponsor the Multi/Single award for CQWW Phone contest. . . . Ron Wright, ZL1AMO, was heading off to Tonga to operate as A35EA, a callsign he still holds. Ron continues to actively support DXing activities and is currently a Director of INDEXA. . . . Pictures of the DXpedition to San Felix Island (CE0AA) provided a taste of the appearance of this South Pacific Ocean Island.

### Ten Years Ago...

Tom Skelton, WB4IUX, provided great coverage on his business trip to Taiwan to operate as BV/WB4IUX. Tom highlighted how he arranged for his visit and operating privileges. His host was BV2TA/Tony. You'll get exhausted reading Tom's account of flying 44 hours round trip to make a business presentation with a one day interlude to operate a ham radio and make 23 QSOs on 40 meters. Whew!

### North Carolina QSO Party

CDXA participation in the 2005 version of the North Carolina QSO party kicked up a notch this year. As usual, Ron Bailey (AA4S) was plying the western counties of NC as a mobile, defending last year's victory. Bill Turner (W4WNT) headed east towards Wilmington to work his way back towards Charlotte as a mobile. Bill Fisher (W4GRW) and Phil Martin (K4ATM) also worked the western counties as mobile operators. Paul Ponak (AD4IE) also was "out and about" mobiling and handing out QSOs. Henry Heidtmann (W2DZO), member of contest organizer Forsyth Amateur Radio Club as well as CDXA, took to the roads to ensure all NC counties were covered

Participation was also very high from fixed location stations. Ten members of CDXA operated in the Club Station category as W4DXA from Discovery Place Science Center. Operators were: AA4SC, AA4ZZ, K4DXA, K4SQR, K8YC, N4HN, W3OA, W3ZL, W4NZC, and

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W4VHF. From the log of W4DXA, the following additional members of CDXA were heard:

|       |        |       |
|-------|--------|-------|
| AA4NN | K4CEB  | K4MD  |
| K4MQG | K4DGJ  | K4RSG |
| K4GHS | N4PQX  | N4BH  |
| N1GC  | W4JG   | W4MBD |
| W4PVT | WA4DOU |       |

A budding radio amateur earned his stripes at Discovery Place. Paul Trotter's (AA4ZZ) son has taken a liking to logging along with his Dad during contests. So when Paul showed up for his turn at the mike, his son was right alongside logging away. (See picture below.)



Weather played a hand for those operating in the mountains. Bill Fisher and Phil Martin were forced to break off their effort when a mountain snowstorm began dumping over 10 inches of snow along the Blue Ridge. (That's the unofficial measurement performed by Ron Bailey on Monday morning when prudence dictated that an overnight stay in Boone was far safer than a run down US 321 in a blinding snowstorm.) Fortunately, the mountain snows produced only a strong rain in Charlotte which did not seem to produce too much rain noise in the receiver.

Ron Bailey reports that his QSO count and multipliers were competitive with last year's effort which netted him a victory as a mobiler, despite being beat out by Old Man Winter. The group operating from Discovery Place was pleased with its results when compared to the club station efforts of previous years. Now we all must wait for the Forsyth ARC crew to total up the scores.

Henry Heidtmann (W2DZO) and his colleagues in Forsyth Amateur Radio Club deserve a thanks for performing all the work in putting on this event. Participation appears to be growing as indicated by a log submission from Greenland this year. Why not give the NC QSO Party a try next year?

### Should Navassa and Desecheo be Open to Hams?

By John A. Scott, K8YC

In the past month or so, we've become aware of a movement by the Lone Star DX Association to attain a special use permit to conduct a DXpedition on Navassa and Desecheo Islands. The last time these islands were "activated" as DX entities was 1993 and 1994, respectively

Desecheo lies about 14 miles west of Puerto Rico. It was placed under the auspices of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 1976. Before that, in 1937 President Roosevelt transferred the island to the insular government of Puerto Rico to use as a forest and bird preserve. During WW II, it was transferred back to the Federal Government for use as a bombing and gunnery range. In the 1950s and 60s, the island was used for survival training by the United States Air Force. In 1965 it was declared surplus military property and eventually ended up under the purview of FWS in 1976.

Navassa, which lies about 35 miles west of the island of Hispaniola, which is home to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, was the site of a major guano mining operation for many years in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, a lighthouse was built on the island to assist with seawise navigation. The U.S. Lighthouse Service operated the lighthouse using lightkeepers until 1929 when the light was automated. During WW II, the U.S. Navy set up an observation post on the island. The U.S. Lighthouse service eventually was absorbed by the U.S. Coastguard which continued to operate the lighthouse until dismantling it in 1996. For years the island has been inhabited by illegal aliens from Haiti. After dismantling the lighthouse, the Coast Guard transferred Navassa to the Department of the Interior and the FWS section of that department made it a National Wildlife refuge in 1999.

The Lone Star DX Association maintains a website to provide information regarding their efforts to activate

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Desecheo and Navassa. Its URL is <http://www.kp1-5.com>. Information presented on the website states:

### **Desecheo**

#### *FWS Claims*

- Desecheo is unsafe because of drug smugglers
- Desecheo is unsafe because of illegal aliens
- Desecheo is unsafe because of unexploded bombs from the bomb range days

#### *DXpedition supporters claim*

- FWS personnel have extensively hiked Desecheo since at least 1979
- FWS personnel frequently camp on Desecheo
- No evidence that smugglers have been on Desecheo since 1990
- No evidence that anyone has ever been harmed or threatened on Desecheo
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cleared all unexploded ordnance they could locate in 2002

### **Navassa**

#### *FWS Claims*

- Navassa's habitat would be damaged by humans
- Navassa's lack of a beach makes landing dangerous

#### *DXpedition supporters claim*

- FWS records reveal a healthy Navassa habitat
- Haitian fishermen regularly camp on the island and start fires there
- When doing field work there, FWS does not require Haitians to leave the island
- FWS personnel climb a ladder to reach the island—nobody's been injured doing so
- Other Federal Government personnel access the island by helicopter

Several members of the House of Representatives have introduced a bill (HR 1183) in support of allowing access to Navassa and Desecheo. To inform myself of the issues, I read about 38 pages of an 81 page brief available on the above referenced website enumerating the events and reasons that the "applicant" of the special use permit feels he has been denied due process by the FWS. I encourage each of you to read at least the first 25 double-spaced typed pages to gain a flavor of the issues. Read more if you've got the inclination. Thereafter, I encourage you to cast your own votes on the issue by contacting your congressman and senator as you see fit.

I would be interested in hearing from you as to your position on this issue after you've digested the major points. Your opinions may make for an interesting forum in the **Pileup**.

### **Supercharged Receivers**

By John Scott, K8YC

Here's a universal truth: Hams are incessant "tinkerers". And for all our tinkering, the world of radio is always improving. There's been a buzz at the regular CDXA Wednesday luncheon meetings of late about improving receiver performance.

But, let's go back a bit. At the hamfest of 2003, I sat near Bill Tippet, W4ZV, in a forum on the Ten-Tec Orion which was then still in the final pre-production testing stages. Bill took it all in and asked some pointed questions of the Ten-Tec engineers. Bill must have liked what he heard, because he soon became an owner of an Orion. One of the innovations of the Orion was the use of a very narrow "roofing filter" in the first IF stage to minimize passing of close-in intermodulation products into later receiver stages. The new ICOM 7800 and Yaesu FT DX 9000 radios have also implemented 3-6 kHz roofing filters into their designs. Use of roofing filters is not new. They've been in use since the 1980s. For receivers of the general coverage variety, the first IF stage is often placed in the 45-70MHz range classifying this receiver as an "up conversion" receiver. The passband of the roofing filter is usually 12-15 kHz to accommodate modes such as FM and AM which have higher bandwidth signals. One of the inherent difficulties of "up-conversion" receivers is, until recently, it has been difficult to make narrow passband filters at VHF frequencies. Ham-only receivers such as made by Ten-Tec and Elecraft have the first IF stages typically between 4 and 10 MHz where narrow roofing filters are easier to construct. Nevertheless, receiver designers know that very narrow roofing filters offer great improvement in crowded band conditions such as are found in DXing and contesting using CW and SSB modes.

After buying the Orion, Bill noticed that the IMD performance of the 500 Hz roofing filter on his Orion was not as good as the 1000 Hz roofing filter. Bill soon found out that the filter Ten-Tec was using for the Orion was the same one used for the Omni-VI. Because the inser-

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tion loss of the 500 Hz filter was higher, an amplification stage had been added, and this stage was causing an IMD degradation. Bill set about to do some of his own engineering, and he ordered an experimenter's kit from International Radio (InRad) to create his own filtering arrangement. The results were very good, and Bill documented his findings on his personal website at: <http://users.vnet.net/btippett/images/W4ZV.htm>. You are encouraged to go to Bill's site to read the whole story which Bill tells with far greater clarity than I can offer here.

Learning of Bill's success, the InRad team packaged a product based on Bill's work for the Orion (InRad Product #762). The receiver performance improvement offered by narrow roofing filters motivated the InRad folks to implement the same concept on the Yaesu FT-1000MP line of transceivers. While exploring the Dayton Hamvention in 2004, Ken Boyd (K4DXA) and Jim Miller (K4SQR) met with the InRad team and each ordered a pre-production version of the InRad products promised for the FT-1000MP and the Ten-Tec OmniVI. The InRad folks developed the Yaesu product first and then set about to develop the Omni VI product. As an early adopter, Ken reports that the filter does all it promises to do. Jim's InRad roofing filter arrived in early February, and early reports from Jim are that it is a fine addition to his OmniVI.

The net result of this "tinkering" is that for a relatively small investment, one can significantly improve the close-in IMD performance of a number of popular transceivers, moving them close to their newer expensive counterparts. Want to learn more? On the InRad website there is an excellent write-up on roofing filters and results achieved from their products. (See: <http://www.qth.com/inrad/index.htm> and once there, click on "Performance Enhancements". Alternatively follow a direct link to: <http://www.qth.com/inrad/roofing-filters.pdf>. You'll need a free Acrobat Reader to open this file.)

### You Heard It Here, First!

Those attending the Annual CDXA Hamfest Dinner got a "scoop" on the rest of the DX world. CQ Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, chose the occasion to announce a new award program to excite interest in the DX community as we approach the nadir of the sunspot cycle. The

new award is to be called the **CQ DX Field Award**. Full details of the award will appear in the April 2005 issue of *CQ Magazine*.

The new award is based on the Maidenhead grid system used very extensively by VHF/UHF operators and contesters. This system identifies curvilinear "squares" on the earth's surface bounded by lines of longitude and latitude. A full Maidenhead grid system identifier consists of a six characters—two upper case letters, followed by two numerals, followed by two lower case letters. The CQ DX Field Award will only use the first two letters which define 324 grid fields on the earth's surface, each field representing 10 degrees of latitude and 20 degrees of longitude. Award categories will be Mixed, CW, SSB, and Digital.

The basic award level starts at 50 Fields worked with endorsements for each 50 additional fields up to 150 fields, then each 25 additional fields up to 300 fields. Honor roll status is achieved when one is able to confirm 175 fields, and honor roll status will be granted for each mode where it is earned. Special endorsements will also be available for selected bands (6m, 10m, 40/80m, and 160m), QRPp, SSTV, OSCAR, and Mobile. (*With over 2/3rds of the earth covered with water, I assume the mobile category includes maritime mobile—The Editor*)

### Hamfest Scenes



President Ted Goldthorpe welcomes guests to the CDXA Charlotte Hamfest Dinner at Kaffe' Frappe' Restaurant. Over 65 people were in attendance for dinner. Many went home with door prizes to add a plus to an enjoyable evening.



## More Hamfest Scenes



Bernie McClenny, W3UR, editor of QST's "How's DX" and The Daily DX and CQ Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, stop by the CDXA booth to visit with Dick Williams and Roger Burt. Bernie's forum covered DXpeditions to the United Nations (4U1UN) and Johnston Atoll.



Here's the "Tennessee 8" if we allow Carl Smith and Dave Anderson to call themselves Tennesseans. Rich Moseson and Wayne Mills are learning all about Tennessee Colonels while Bill Tippet either is flashing "V" for victory or trying to give Wayne some horns!



Bernie, W3UR, stops to chat with Lynn Lamb, W4NL, Carl Smith, N4AA, and Don Prater, W4TO. Lynn and Don are part of the "Tennessee 8", a group who've joined us for the past several years.



L to R: Ken Cannaday, Wayne Setzer, Mrs. Caselli, Wilson Caselli, Shelley Cannaday and Shelley's visiting educator from China. Through this "cultural exchange", Shelley's friend from China learned how raucous a bunch of hams can become!



Bill Tippet, W4ZV, and Wayne Mills, N7NG, chat about—of all things—DXing!



Jim and Norma Miller, Joe and Margaret Blackwell, and Beverly and Ken Boyd prepare their palates for a great meal served by the team at Kaffe' Frappe'. The Annual Meeting/Christmas party was also here, and it is now high on our list of favorites.

## The Back Page

If you missed the **Charlotte Hamfest**, you can find out what you missed inside. The front page shows the winner of our raffle, Bill LaMay. A picture gallery of Hamfest Happenings starts on page 6 and continues through page 7.

What's all this stuff you've been hearing about **"roofing" filters** to make your receiver perform better? Read all about it on starting on Page 5. Links to some good websites are included to help you dig deeper into the subject.

The **North Carolina QSO Party** is now behind us. CDXA had a number of participants in this contest of ever-growing popularity with North Carolina hams. An amateur radio station from Greenland even competed and has submitted his log. Article starts on Page 3.

Background on the efforts to get a special use permit for DXpeditions to **Navassa and Desecheo** can be found starting on Page 4. A link to a website containing a legal brief describing the position and efforts of the petitioner will certainly help you to get a grasp of the issues.

Hey, folks! It's time to get on track for June's **Field Day**. Let your officers know if you want to play a role this year.

### Upcoming Contests:

| Date(s)         | Contest                            | Comments  |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Mar. 19-20      | Russian DX Contest                 | SSB and CW See <a href="http://www.rdxo.org">http://www.rdxo.org</a>                                |
| Mar. 19-21      | Virginia QSO Party                 | Phone, CW and Digital See <a href="http://www.qsl.net/sterling">http://www.qsl.net/sterling</a>     |
| Mar. 19-21      | BARTG Spring RTTY                  | (British) See <a href="http://www.bartg.demon.co.uk">http://www.bartg.demon.co.uk</a>               |
| Mar. 27-28      | CQ WW WPX SSB                      | See CQ website for details  |
| Mar. 26 - Apr 3 | Lighthouse Spring Lights QSO Party | See <a href="http://arlhs.com/SL-2005-guidelines.html">http://arlhs.com/SL-2005-guidelines.html</a> |

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## First Class Mail

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